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## Quit Talking and Start Doing Something!



**Y**ears ago, one of our Adventist magazines published a parable about a dreadful swamp. As people passed along the path going through it, they were often overcome and fell in. Their dying cries could be heard all through the nearby village. It was terrible.

The people held a village council. In fact, they held many village councils. Various theories and papers were presented analyzing the cause and sometimes even proposing solutions. But nothing was ever done except to continue meeting and talking. Over the years, the discussions continued. People wrote dissertations on the topic. Guest lecturers were brought in. Yard sales were held to raise money so that meals could be provided to those who sacrificed so many hours sitting in these meetings. Eventually, money was raised to build a soundproof meeting room so that the cries of the lost and dying would not disrupt the ongoing discussions. But nobody did anything to help those who were in trouble. And nobody did anything to try to stop more people from being lost in the swamp. They just talked.

The church as a whole and your Sabbath School class in particular don't want to be like the people in that village. We love our time together to pray, think, share, and discuss. But we long to go beyond this and actually do something for and with those around us. We want to make a difference in our communities and around the world. We want the work to be finished, and we want Jesus to return.

This quarter's *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* is designed to focus attention

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on getting out there and doing something. We will examine many wonderful Bible stories. We will read about exciting experiences and illustrations. We will learn about available resources to assist us in reaching out to our neighbors (especially to those who have no Christian background). But those will just be ways of illustrating and motivating us. The real focus, the real heart of each lesson, is what will be shared on Thursday each week—a challenge to get out and, actually, do something.

We will share theological insights and provide tools and ideas for you to work with. And each Thursday's portion of the lesson will issue a careful progression of challenges. It will begin easy. And as the quarter goes along, there will be subtle (and not so subtle) increases in the challenge. The goal is for each of us to take the challenge, pray for the Holy Spirit to guide us, and then spend a few minutes in the next week discussing how it went. This isn't to be a time of boasting, but a time of sharing—both about what went well and what didn't. As we share, the group will generate ideas. Prayer lists will grow (personal and collective).

In the end, it is our desire that this quarter be remembered not for memorable thoughts, engaging stories, or deep theological concepts. These may be there—lots of them. But it is our desire that we will all look back on this quarter as the time when the Holy Spirit took our humble efforts and worked mission miracles for the honor and glory of His name.

*It is our desire that we will look back on this quarter as the time when the Holy Spirit took our humble efforts and worked mission miracles for the honor and glory of God's name.*

*The Global Mission Centers were first established by the General Conference in 1980. They operate under the direction of the General Conference Office of Adventist Mission. There are currently six centers. Their purpose is to help the church more effectively start new groups of believers among the major non-Christian people groups of the world.*

*At the time of this writing, the directors of these centers (Petras Bahadur, Richard Elofer, Kleber Gonçalves, Clifmond Shameerudeen, Doug Venn, Amy Whitsett, Greg Whitsett), assisted by Homer Trecartin (Global Mission Centers director), and Jeff Scoggins (Global Mission Planning director), collectively authored this Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide. For more information, please go to [www.GlobalMissionCenters.org](http://www.GlobalMissionCenters.org).*

# How to Use This Teachers Edition

**“The true teacher is not content with dull thoughts, an indolent mind, or a loose memory. He constantly seeks higher attainments and better methods. His life is one of continual growth. In the work of such a teacher there is a freshness, a quickening power, that awakens and inspires his [class].”**

—Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 103.

To be a Sabbath School teacher is both a privilege and a responsibility. A privilege because it offers the teacher the unique opportunity to lead and guide in the study and discussion of the week’s lesson so as to enable the class to have both a personal appreciation for God’s Word and a collective experience of spiritual fellowship with class members. When the class concludes, members should leave with a sense of having tasted the goodness of God’s Word and having been strengthened by its enduring power. The responsibility of teaching demands that the teacher is fully aware of the Scripture to be studied, the flow of the lesson through the week, the interlinking of the lessons to the theme of the quarter, and the lesson’s application to life and witness.

This guide is to help teachers to fulfill their responsibility adequately. It has three segments:

- 1. Overview** introduces the lesson topic, key texts, links with the previous lesson, and the lesson’s theme. This segment deals with such questions as Why is this lesson important? What does the Bible say about this subject? What are some major themes covered in the lesson? How does this subject affect my personal life?
- 2. Commentary** is the chief segment in the Teachers Edition. It may have two or more sections, each one dealing with the theme introduced in the Overview segment. The Commentary may include several in-depth discussions that enlarge the themes outlined in the Overview. The Commentary provides an in-depth study of the themes and offers scriptural, exegetic, illustrative discussion material that leads to a better understanding of the themes. The Commentary also may have scriptural word study or exegesis appropriate to the lesson. On a participatory mode, the Commentary segment may have discussion leads, illustrations appropriate to the study, and thought questions.
- 3. Life Application** is the final segment of the Teachers Edition for each lesson. This section leads the class to discuss what was presented in the Commentary segment as it impacts Christian life. The application may involve discussion, further probing of what the lesson under study is all about, or perhaps personal testimony on how one may feel the impact of the lesson on one’s life.

**Final thought:** What is mentioned above is only suggestive of the many possibilities available for presenting the lesson and is not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive in its scope. Teaching should not become monotonous, repetitious, or speculative. Good Sabbath School teaching should be Bible-based, Christ-centered, faith-strengthening, and fellowship-building.